

The West River delineates part of the boundary between West Haven and New Haven. This beautiful, slow-moving river originates in Bethany and travels south to empty into the New Haven Harbor. The trail passes by urban areas and the New Haven Railroad in West Haven and then follows the riverbank by developed and undeveloped park land, water and brackish marsh with great canoeing and bird watching opportunities. From the south - the trail originates in West Haven along Kimberly Avenue to Ella Grasso Boulevard before heading west along Orange Avenue. The trail then connects northward to the West River Memorial Park, Edgewood Park, and West Rock State Park through a series of pedestrian easements. These three parks form a nearly continuous, largely undeveloped recreation facility with the West River at its heart.

The river banks are covered by diverse vegetation that provides a rich and varied habitat for wildlife. The River is seasonally home to Great Egret, Black Crowned Night Heron, King Fishers, Great Blue Heron, wild turkeys, song birds, shore-birds, and sometimes osprey. Memorial Park has three osprey platforms and osprey can be seen from April through August. In May and June, many birds are drawn to the river to feed on River Heron. During the fall, migrating waterfowl are present with some species that winter over in this area. Areas along the West River are also home to visiting White Tail Deer and muskrat can often be seen swimming to and from their burrows in the riverbank. Various wildflowers bloom from spring through fall along the banks and in the adjacent meadows. There are several environmentally sensitive areas in Memorial Park that are clearly marked by signs that should not be disturbed.

The West River Trail area passes through the 181-acre West River Memorial Park. The City of New Haven acquired the Park after World War I to honor residents who gave their lives in battle. The beautiful scenic vista from Orange Avenue looking north over the dredged channel to West Rock was the original theme for the landscape design by Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. and E.G. Whiting. Today, that view remains largely unspoiled by development.

Photo by the Department of Environmental Protection



Directions and Parking:

The West River Trail can be started at various points. The start of the trail in West Haven can be reached via I-95 (Exit 44) Kimberly Avenue. The parking at West River Memorial Park is best accessed off of I-95 (Exit 45) which leads to Ella T. Grasso Boulevard. You can also park near the Edgewood Park Ranger Station and walk along Ella T. Grasso Blvd.

Permitted Activities:

This trail is for hiking only. Some of the trail passes through environmentally sensitive areas—please avoid these areas where indicated. Canoe and boat launches are located in West River Memorial Park. Canoeing/kayaking is best at medium to high tide. Swimming is prohibited. Dogs are allowed on leash. Please bag and pick up all dog waste.

For more information about these park locations, contact:

City of New Haven
Department of Parks, Recreation & Trees
(203) 946-8027
www.cityofnewhaven.com/parks

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